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## BOOK REVIEW

Delamont, S. (ed.) (2012) *Handbook of qualitative research in education*.  
Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

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Library shelves are full to the brim with very useful handbooks for qualitative researchers to use in carrying out interviews, focus groups and other common approaches to addressing the educational problems of the time. For those concerned about the impact of educational policies and practices, there is a plentiful supply of guides to help design an appropriate study in order to come up with some answers. There are, however, fewer texts for researchers less interested in providing answers to hot topics such as this, and more interested in carrying out research which raises questions about education. Sara Delamont's (2014) *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* does the important job of filling this gap in the methods literature.

Using James Elroy Flecker's poem 'The Gates of Damascus' (1947), Delamont constructs the analogy of four paths researchers interested in education (whatever form or area this might encompass) might take. Three of these gates, lead the researcher to avoid addressing what Delamont argues is the biggest problem facing the field of research: the need to fight familiarity. The Aleppo Gate – the route for trade and commerce – is taken when researchers engage in research that is addressing practical problems that are posed by educational practitioners and policy-makers. It is argued that those taking this gate are blinded by the concerns and problems of the educator subculture and as such will struggle to advance educational research. To fight familiarity, and advance the field, researchers need to take the fourth gate, the Lebannon Gate.

Delamont's volume showcases some of the best work that has been done by those leaving Damascus through the fourth gate. It shows the reader how to fight

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familiarity through a consideration of the theories and traditions we situate ourselves within and the methods of data collection and analysis we deploy. The volume is divided into three main parts, the first of which is a consideration of theories and traditions within qualitative educational research. There is an insightful piece by David Mills on the nature of anthropological approaches to the study of education issues, which draws attention to valuable educational projects in this tradition, including his own. The usefulness of social identity theories in education are considered by Sean Kelly and Richard Marjerus, illustrated through drawing on four seminal studies, including Willis' (1981) *Learning to Labor*. Other contributions explore the value of perspectives including sociolinguistics, genealogy, feminism and queer theory to the study of education.

Delamont quite rightly points out that there is a shortage of studies looking at education which happens outside of schools. Part two of this volume shines a light on seven places of teaching and learning that are not within the domain of the traditional school setting. These include sites of vocational education and training, medical education, higher education, teacher education, total institutions, and cyberspace. Lesley Pugsley's chapter on medical education illustrates the value of exploring such settings in broadening our understandings about the transmission of knowledge and the assimilation of cultural norms and values. Cyberspace is the focus of Hugh Busher and Nalita James' contribution, which provides unique insights into the study of interactions within online spaces.

Part three of the volume moves on to explore methods of data collection. Louisa Allen opens with a detailed look at the use of photo methods, drawing attention to its lack of use in educational research, as well as the possibilities and challenges the method poses. Other contributors explore the use of mobile methods, the life history approach, narratives, documents and archives, memory books, video journals, ethnographic research, autoethnography, individual interviews, focus groups, and pictures. The chapters in this section are short yet comprehensive, providing a good overview and useful insights, as well as important reflections on the challenges posed by different methods. White's account of video journals is particularly useful for those considering this kind of method, using his own research study to illustrate differing approaches to drawing on videos as well as practical issues and challenges.

The final part of this volume is concerned with analysis and representation. Delamont brings together a variety of rich and creative approaches. William Housely begins by providing a very comprehensive overview of the ethnomethodology and conversation analysis tradition, usefully summarising six areas in education where these methods have been deployed. Further chapters focus on the narrative approach, analysis of fieldnotes, as well as a very practical contribution from Kate Stewart on CAQDAS. The volume finishes with looking at diverse forms of representation, which for me were the most interesting and refreshing contributions, from literary and poetics to performance and dance. Whilst the latter have faced criticism in the educational research community, they are important in getting us to think about settings from a different perspective, and thus go some way in helping the researcher to fight all that is familiar about the notion of education.

This handbook, in bringing together all those who have taken the fourth gate, is a much needed contribution to the research methods literature, inspiring the reader to think differently as they leave for the field, and giving them the tools to do. It certainly made me reflect on my own thinking and approaches. The volume will be of interest to anybody who is interested in thinking about education (wherever this might happen or be found) in a way that is provoking, rather than answering, questions.